

JOB CORPS

PARTNERSHIPS THAT WORK

Dallas Region
August/September 2003
volume 4 issue 5

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Pryor Vows Job Corps Support

Reprinted with permission of Time Record, Terry Groover, staff writer

CASS — Touting Cass Job Corps' success rate at training young adults, Arkansas Sen. Mark Pryor, on Monday [August 18, 2003], vowed to continue supporting federal funding for the program, as well as two other Arkansas Job Corps programs.

"More than 87 percent of the people who come through this program end up with a job. That is an amazing statistic. It's hard to find that high of a percentage right out of the gate," said Pryor during a visit to the residential training center north of Ozark.

Each year, more than 2,000 young adults between the ages of 16 and 24 participate in some type of vocational training at the facility. Those programs include business technology, carpentry, welding, and culinary skills, among others.

"At any given time, more than 240 people are enrolled in the program,"

said Director Jesse James III.

During Monday's tour, Pryor said he was impressed with the facility, and plans to promote the program when he returns to Congress this fall.

"The affect of being here, seeing it, and hearing what it does for the community, that gives me tools to fight for Job Corps," said Pryor.

James said with federal funding becoming harder to come by, Monday's tour was an opportunity to impress upon Pryor how important the program is.

"Seeing is believing. Our most valuable assets are our young people," said James.

Cass' staff helps each student find a job after completing the program. He said more than 87 percent of Cass' students leave the facility with a job that pays at least \$8 per hour.

"They are earning wages and providing support. I'm one of those

who see the value of this program," Pryor said.

The Job Corps program is funded, nationally, through the U.S. Department of Labor. Jose de Olivares, Regional Director for the program in Dallas, said the program's national budget last year was about \$1.5 billion.

He said Cass' success rate for job placement is on par with the national and regional average of 88 percent.

"Our national goal is 95 percent placement," de Olivares said. "We do real well with placement considering the students come to us unemployed. To get them to this point is quite an accomplishment," Pryor agreed.

"It pays for itself. These people aren't on welfare, aren't on public assistance, and are not contributing to the crime statistics. They aren't in a prison bed. We're getting our money's worth," Pryor said.

Job Corps Squares Off in Pre-regional Academic Olympics

Ouachita Job Corps in Royal, Arkansas, hosted a Pre-Regional Academic Olympic competition in preparation for the yearly regional event. The three Arkansas Centers have been competing in this yearly pre-competition event for the last six years. The event has been a rotating event with the centers taking turns as the host. This year, a team from Louisiana joined them.

Marilyn Siverson, Academic Manager, welcomed the competing teams to the center. They were given tours of the center and a delicious luncheon was prepared for the teams. Valerie Harwood, Center Director, opened the competition with the event coordinator, Teena Forthman, reviewing the competition rules.

Competing in the pre-regional event were the teams representing Ouachita Job Corps, Cass Job Corps, Ozark, AR, Little Rock Job Corps, Little Rock, AR, and the 2002 Regional Champions, Shreveport Job Corps, Shreveport, LA. The four teams faced tough questions in the areas of language arts, math, science, and social studies. They also faced bonus questions from the areas of health and current events.

After a grueling battle, Shreveport earned the winning title of the annual pre-regional event with Cass in 2nd place, Ouachita in 3rd, and Little Rock Job Corps placing 4th. All left the event realizing they had a lot of hard work ahead of them prior to the Annual Regional Academic Olympics in October.



Employment and
Training Administration

JOB CORPS News

DEALING WITH OVERCHOICE ANXIETY

Helping Prospects Choose Job Corps – and Stay There

By Dean Christopher



An earlier column traced the parallel between social programs and marketing, noting that Job Corps is really a brand, like any other individualized product or service. As we move into the fall recruiting season, it might be useful to take another look at the challenges facing the Job Corps brand.

Attracting motivated students – and maximizing the number of completers – has never been easy. And nowadays, with the world changing so fast, in so many ways, it's harder than ever. Many elements contribute to an atmosphere of near-chaos. Among them is one element unique to – or at least most prevalent in – the U.S.

That element is *overchoice*.

No other civilization in history has ever offered such an enormous array of options to choose from – in every imaginable area. Our country is like a humongous coast-to-coast super-duper-market crammed with products, services, travel and entertainment options, lifestyle alternatives ... and social programs. Among the latter, competing with the Job Corps brand, are dozens – maybe even hundreds – of vocational and educational choices available to at-risk youth. When Job Corps prospects see how many possibilities are out there, they're likely to be hit by what marketers call "overchoice anxiety." And when they struggle with overchoice anxiety, people usually react in one of three ways:

1. *They default to habit* and buy the same brand they always buy;

2. *They gravitate to the biggest, noisiest, most famous brand*; or

3. *They act on emotion* and buy a brand they feel will solve their problem.

How can we put this knowledge to work for Job Corps? Let's check the list.

1. *Default to habit.* No, Job Corps isn't a brand that at-risk youth regularly "buy." Vocational training isn't a frequently-purchased item like detergent or chicken thighs. It's usually a once-in-a-lifetime proposition. So *there's rarely a brand precedent* for at-risk young people to default to – except the street, the option we work hardest to keep them from choosing.

2. *Biggest, noisiest, most famous?* Bzzzzt. Sorry, Job Corps doesn't have instant name recognition in its category, the way (for example) McDonald's, Chevy, and Blockbuster have in theirs. Despite a 40-year track record of successfully preparing youth for the Wide World of Work, the general public is spectacularly unaware of you. Generating bigness, noise, and fame is a task for advertising, PR, marketing communications, and community outreach (including recruitment). Some of those areas need major improvement – but that's another column.

3. *Act on emotion and buy the brand they feel will solve their problem?* Here you have a good shot. Why? Because purchase decisions are driven more by emotion than by logic. Brands that project strong emotional relevance attract more customers – and therefore develop more customer loyalty. This is where on-center staff can (and must) make a difference. By emotionally connecting with students on center, you accomplish two

important things:

- *You boost retention.* Kids are more likely to stick around if they sense they're liked. This also makes the program more cost effective, since it typically costs anywhere between five and ten times as much to "conquer" a new customer as to retain an existing one.
- *You help build brand equity* (making the brand "bigger, noisier and more famous") with positive word-of-mouth pouring into the community from happy graduates. Satisfied customers build brands. Each time you convert a wary teenager into a true believer, you create a satisfied customer – and a potential spokesperson for the Job Corps brand.

Result? As the positive PR message spreads, it *narrows down the range of choices for those who hear it*. Since we all prefer to go where we're cared about, prospects will be more likely to choose Job Corps, due to the personalized climate of support created by your staff. Lots of companies can teach you to use a wrench or a computer. Very few are driven by a sense of social responsibility – human beings actively caring for other human beings. That is the Job Corps competitive edge: *caring*.

Bottom line: To defeat overchoice anxiety, Job Corps' best bet is to show that there's no better choice for being cared for – and cared about. Job Corps staffers already care about people, or they wouldn't be working here. Still, consciously caring *even a tiny bit more* will provide a key emotional reason for prospects to choose the Job Corps brand.

Ask Arla

Dear Arla,

Can you explain to me why only certain people are listed in the CDSS directory?

C.G. – Arkansas

Dear C.G.,

I'm glad you asked this question. I've

answered it before, but since it comes up from time to time, I'll answer it again. The directory only contains information on each center, center director, deputy director, BCL, CDSS manager, academic manager, vocational manager, transition coordinator, career advisor, and OA. If we listed everyone, we'd

have a very large book that we would not be able to produce on a bimonthly basis.

Next newsletter deadline is **Friday, November 7, 2003**. Send your info to:
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JOB CORPS News

Albuquerque Job Corps Approved to Grant High School Diplomas

(Santa Fe, NM) - The New Mexico State Board of Education has approved the Albuquerque Job Corps to grant high school diplomas. The Albuquerque Job Corps was approved in January as a non-public degree granting postsecondary school.

"We hope to implement this program early in the summer," said Anna Marie Amonitello,

Business Community Liaison with the Albuquerque Job Corps.

The Albuquerque Job Corps is operated by Del-Jen, Inc., and funded by the U.S. Department of Labor. Job Corps is the nation's largest residential education and training program for socially/economically challenged youth, ages 16-24. The Albuquerque Job Corps

is contracted to serve 415 youth, 80 percent residential, and 20 percent nonresidential. On average, it serves 650 students each year.

Youth at Job Corps are able to attain a high school diploma or General Educational Development (GED), learn a trade, and other valuable employability skills.

Letters to the Editor

Dear Editor:

Can you explain why some OMS measures are model-based and others aren't?

Thanks, *Confused by OMS Measures*

Dear Confused by OMS Measures,

Just to give you some background, the Outcome Measurement System (OMS) is utilized by Job Corps to assess the effectiveness of center operators, outreach and admissions agencies, placement agencies, and vocational training programs through these reports:

- Center Report Card OMS – 10
- Outreach & Admissions Report Card OAOMS – 10
- Career Transition Services Report

Card POMS – 10

- Vocational Evaluation System Report VES – 10

Each measurement system uses a report card based on three elements:

1. The specific measures included in the system
2. The goals established for each measure
3. The weights assigned to each measure in the overall system

To answer your question, some measures consist of goals established by national goals and are the same across the board. For other measures, the goals are model-based and are understanding of varied operator conditions.

The main reason for using models to set individualized center goals is to "level the playing field" by adjusting for differences in key factors that are beyond the operator's control. A model helps to ensure fairness by recognizing that an operator's actual performance on a given outcome measure depends not only on management practices, but also on the abilities of the students and characteristics of its operating environment. For example, through a model-based approach, centers that serve students that are placed in high-wage labor markets would be assigned a higher graduate average initial wage goal than centers that serve students that are mainly placed in low-wage labor markets.

Center Tidbits

David L. Carrasco

Luis Arias, Federal Bureau of Investigation, and Lt. Ray Rodriguez, El Paso Policy Department, were presented with the National Job Corps Association's Alpha Award in Washington, D.C., on July 23rd. The Alpha Award recognizes individuals and organizations that provide outstanding support to Job Corps centers. Arias and Rodriguez were nominated by the center to recognize their development of the Law Enforcement and Public Service (LEAPS) program. The LEAPS program was designed to serve as a means for law enforcement and public service agencies to provide career information to center students, who then are

able to explore the various opportunities for employment available within these agencies.

Sixty-five students are gaining valuable work experience and fine-tuning their skills through the center's Vocational Skills Training (VST) program. According to Director of Vocational Training Juan Lechuga, "The VST program is an important phase of the students' training because it provides them with the hands-on training they will need in the work place." Off-center VST projects provide the center with the necessary links to employers. Facilities Maintenance Instructor Annesley Whelpdale said, "The students have an opportunity to apply the skills they learned in the classroom. VST is a win-

win situation for both the student and the center." Currently, Facilities Maintenance and Welding students are working on two VST projects on-center. Welding students have constructed the framework for a canopy on the outside of the main building and a cover over the walkway leading to the Education Building. Facilities Maintenance students have installed and painted the canopies and laid tile over the old sidewalk. When these projects are completed, more than 3,000 square feet of tile and 400 feet of canopy will have been installed. Welding students also fabricated a scaled version of the St. Louis arch, the Gateway to the West. The 1/47th size arch will be installed at the end of the staircase leading to the walkway.

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Twelve members of the David L. Carrasco Student Government Association and People for the Ethical Treatment of the Environment (PETE) Club donated their time and energy to help the City of El Paso. The City Department of Public Works requested the assistance of the two student organizations to help place plastic stickers in English and Spanish near storm drains to try to prevent the illegal dumping of pollutants and other hazardous waste into the drain system, which flows into the Rio Grande.

Guthrie

Trainees and staff from the Guthrie (Oklahoma) Job Corps Center have been working on a major building improvement project designed to enhance both the function and form of the recently acquired headquarters of the Logan County Chapter of the American Red Cross. Dozens of different individuals from the Home Builders Institute Plumbing, Facilities Maintenance, and Electrical House wiring programs, along with Res-Care's Integrated Construction Technology program, have participated. The project consists of constructing a 550 square-foot addition on the rear of the building, interior remodeling of the existing structure, and modification of the front elevation. The added space includes a wheelchair accessible shower and restroom area, a small auxiliary restroom, a food preparation area, and a laundry area. The primary purpose of this VST project remains hands-on training in a real work situation. However, these new facilities are also intended to help the local Red Cross better assist people who may have lost their homes in a disaster. The existing front area will be partitioned into offices and a conference room. The space that currently serves as restrooms and a small storage room will be converted into a new, larger storage area. The building is to be completely rewired and a new central heating and air conditioning system will be installed. "I really like going out to work on this project – even with the unbelievably hot weather we've had – because I'm learning some things about real work that you can't learn in the classroom," said James Oliver, a Facilities Maintenance trainee. It is

estimated that all phases of this project should be complete by mid-December of this year.

Little Rock

Our Academic Olympics team will travel to the Ouachita Job Corps to compete against their team Monday, September 15, 2003. Both teams will compete in the five academic disciplines that will be covered at the Regional Academic Olympics in October. In addition, our team will compete in the 2nd Annual Little Rock Job Corps Quiz Bowl held at the ML Harris Auditorium on the campus of Philander Smith College on September 25, 2003, at 6:00 p.m. Our team will compete against community and legislative leaders in the five disciplines of oratory, language arts, science, social studies, and math. Last year, our team beat the community by a landslide, and we anticipate another victory this year!

New Orleans

Employers and job seekers in the New Orleans East area will now be able to access labor exchange services and training at the new career center, which opened on Monday, July 28. "The New Orleans East Career Center is another example of how we are working with local partners to make government more customer-focused and government services more readily accessible," said Governor M.J. "Mike" Foster Jr. At the new center, employers will be able to find resources to locate new quality workers and update skills and abilities of their current workforce, and information on employment related tax credits. Additionally, job seekers will have access to all types of employment information including current job openings, occupations in demand industries experiencing rapid growth, resumé and interview workshops, and education and training opportunities. Furthermore, the New Orleans East Career Center will assist individuals who have lost their jobs through no fault of their own with unemployment benefit claims. This is the New Orleans Workforce Partnership's second career center, joining the Adult Career Center in New Orleans. The training center is a product of the partnership between the Louisiana

Department of Labor (LDOL), Goodwill Industries, New Orleans Job Corps, the Mayor's Office of Workforce Development, and the New Orleans East Economic Development Foundation.

Shreveport

Johnny Campbell has been selected to perform at this year's National Job Corps Association Eighth Annual Alpha Awards to be held in Washington, DC, during the week of July 23, 2003. Johnny is a student employee matriculating in the Business Office Technology program at the Shreveport Job Corps Center. The Alpha Awards is dedicated to honoring employers, community leaders, and other individuals who have made an exceptional commitment to the success of Job Corps students. Johnny is scheduled to render an opening selection at the Conference, which brings together nearly 500 of Job Corps' leaders nationwide and focuses on providing staff with tools and resources needed for serving youth better.

Talking Leaves

Talking Leaves Job Corps Academic Team is studying, studying, studying. This year's team is eager to compete in beautiful San Antonio, Texas. Talking Leaves students have been very successful competing academically the past five years. Talking Leaves has won first place overall twice, team competition once, and seven individual scholarships and has not finished below 4th overall since the scholarships have been awarded. Students have won \$9,500 in total scholarship money and have used these scholarships to continue their education at numerous colleges and technology centers throughout the Nation. Coaches for this year's team are Sandra Caughman, Debbie Davis, Rose Coon, and team advisor, Sueann Freeman.

